NARRATIVE

OF THE

Life, Apprehenſion, Impriſonment, and Condemnation of

RICHARD DUDLY

The Great Robber,

WITH

His Speeches and Confeſſion, both before, and at his Execution.

London Printed 1669.

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The Life and Death OF CAPTAIN *DUDLY* THE Great HIGHWAY-MAN.

Richard Dudly, commonly called Captain *Dudly*, was born in *Leicestershire*, at a placed called *Swepston*; his Father was a good Gentleman, and had a fair Estate, but had not the fortune to keep it, his expences so much exceeding his other comings in, that he was forced to sell and morgage the greatest part of it to satisfie his Debts, and having but a small matter left, about threescore pound a year, he came up to *London* with his Family, hoping by the obscurity of his living, to contain himself within the bounds of that small remainder which was left him.

Being now come to *London*, we will leave the Father, and give you an account of the Son, who is the unhappy occasion of this Discourse. *Richard Dudly* the Son, having been an Officer in the King's Army (was commonly called by the name of Captain

Dudly) afterwards living with his Father, he married a Gentlewoman of a good Fortune, having with her fevenſcore pounds a yeare, upon which they lived comfortably. He having much acquaintance, became at laſt engaged for the payment of ſome money which one of his companions owed, who was afterwards Arreſted for the ſaide Debt, in which Arreſt a Bayliff was killed, and Captain *Dudly* (being then preſent) ſuſpected to have done it, upon which he abſented himſelf from his own houſe (being laid out for to be apprehended) in which time he came acquainted with a gang of Highway-men, by whoſe eaſineſs of living, and extravagant expences, he was eaſily overcome to make a tryal of the Trade, before he would condeſcend to be one of their Gang; but a ſmall matter of tryal ſerved his turn, and few perſwaſions were needful with one, where Vice had got the upperhand of Vertue, who was more inclined to live upon the ruin of his Countrymen, than by the ſweat of his brows, having been more uſed to fight than to work; he was not long a learning of his Trade, but in a little time became Maſter of it, and there was ſcarce any notable Robbery committed in which *Dudly* had not a hand; and finding it both eaſie and profitable, he with much perſwaſion drew in his Brother to be one of their Gang, whoſe name was *William Dudly*; long he had not gone on in this new Trade of Robbing, before he was apprehended in the Country, and brought to his Tryal for a Robbery committed by him, but with much adoe he eſcaped that bout; reſolving ſtill to continue his Trade, he again falls in with his old companions, who for their many and great Robberies committed,

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notwithstanding all the care that could be taken by the Countreys to prevent them, yet could they not be hindred. For the suppression of these Robbers, the King summoned them by Proclamation, and gave strict charge to all persons, with encouragement for their apprehension, which not long after happed to Captain *Dudly* and some others.

The manner of Captain *Dudly's* apprehension was as followeth; He with five others having committed a Robbery, and being closly pursued by the Country, were forced to ride hard for their security, and having got so far as the Mill-pond at *Westminster*, they there endeavoured to pass, but the Wherryman denied, saying, he would go over no more that night, upon which two rid away, the other four gave their Horses to a Water-man to carry to an Inn, which was not far off, being all over of a foam with their hard riding, which gave occasion to the Waterman to mistrust that they were Highway-men, and had been pursued that day; two of them after their Horses were set up, took Oars and went over to *Lambeth*, the other two took into a house. The rumour of this matter being come to the ears of a Constable, he presently makes it his business to find them out, and getting such a Guard as was needful, he presently goes to the Inn, makes enquiry what kind of persons they were, and gives order for the securing of their Horses, which was accordingly done, and then makes search after the men: Being in the yard, he observed a person to walk up and down, as if he were sent for intelligence, to whom, when he came, he demanded what he wanted? the other asked him if such a one did not dwell there? he told him no; then

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he asked another name, which was the name of the man of the House, the Constable told him he did, and that he would go up to the house with him, which he did: and knocking at the door, he enquired for a person which the Maid denied, and suddenly shut the door upon him, which occasioned a greater mistrust in the Constable, upon which he demands of the man what persons he enquired after? and told him, he suspected him to be one of those that had committed the Robbery that day, or that he belonged to some of them (the Constable being all this while at a distance from his Guard, and without his staff) but now having matter of suspicion enough, he draws the fellow nearer his Guard, and then layes hands on him boldly, charging him to be one of those Robbers, or some retainer belonging to them, threatning to carry him before a Magistrate; the Fellow being amazed at this unexpected surprize, presently confessed that he was sent by those that had made their escapes, to see what became of their Horses, and whether there was any inquiry made after them: The Constable demanded if he knew where they were? he answered, that two of them were in the house where he knocked, and the other two at an Inn in *Lambeth*. Upon this the Constable takes his Guard with him, and goes to the house, knocks at the door, which was not presently opened, but upon his threatning to break open the door, it was opened to him; where being no sooner entred, but he discovered *Dudly* going down a pair of stairs into a cellar, he follows after him, but not so fast but that *Dudly* had time to get into a further cellar and bolt himself in, which was soon forced open, where they found *Dudly* with his

sword

ſword in one hand and piſtol in the other, threatning the death of any that ſhould attempt to take him, but his courage failing him, he was preſently diſarmed and brought away Priſoner. The Conſtable ſecuring him with a good Guard, went over to *Lambeth*, where he apprehended the other two, and in the morning brought them before a Juſtice, who ſent them to Newgate.

At the Seſſions Captain *Dudly* had his Tryal, where he was found guilty by the Jury for Robbing upon the Highway, and on Saturday received Sentence to be hanged at Tyburn.

Some paſſages obſerved of Captain Dudly *after his Condemnation, and in the time of his Impriſonment in* Newgate *before Execution.*

After he had received Sentence, and was brought back to *Newgate*, he began to have a ſenſe of his near approaching end, and was obſerved on the Lord's day to demean himſelf very reverently all the while the Miniſter was preaching, and to give good ear to what was then ſaid. He confeſſed he was a great offender, and that he juſtly deſerved death, that he was very unfit to die, and had great trouble upon his conſcience, and wiſhed he had a longer time, that he might make his peace with God: He would deſire of Gentlemen which came in great companies to ſee him, to pray for him, and to take warning by him, and let his ſhame be a means to preſerve others from taking the like courſes. On *Tueſday*, one that came to ſee him, askt him, if the nearneſs of his death, (he being in perfect health, and to die the next day) did not ſtartle him? To which he replyed, yes, I have now but 24 hours to live, (it being then eleven of the clock).

clock) and shaking his head, desired of the Lord to forgive him; and to those that were with him, he said, I pray you pray for me, that the Lord would forgive me, and open my eyes that I may see my sins. A Gentleman that came to see him, gave him some *Spanish* Tobacco, and would have given him more, which he refused, thanking of him for what he had given him, telling of him, that it would serve him longer than he should live. He did not seem much to be cast down, endeavouring to carry himself as cheerfully as he could, but he could not so well counterfeit, but that any one might easily discern he was much troubled within. He confessed he robb'd many men, but that he was never guilty of any mans blood in [illegible] very sick, and lay all along in the Cart, but he and [illegible] *other* rode in a Cart together, looking very cheerfully all the way they went. When he came to the place of Execution, he confessed he had been a great offender, and that he justly [illegible] prayers of all the people, that God would forgive him; and after such Duties as use to be performed on such occasions (by the Minister) were ended, they were all turned off together. Thus ended the Life of him who had been a great Robber, and had undone many a Poor man, being accompanied in his end with two of his Companions, whose shameful end (being the just revvard of so vvicked a Life) deserves as little pity, as they vvere vvont to use in their unjust Robberies.

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